4th Transportation Battalion/44th Support Battalion





2 views of 4th Transportation Battalion unit crest mousover for a description

World War II

The 4th Transportation Battalion was constituted on 8 April 1943 as Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 4th Quartermaster Troop Transport Battalion. On 3 May 1943, it activated under the command of MAJ Lynn Spillman at Camp Young, California, with six truck companies. It was reorganized and re-designated as HHD, 4th Quartermaster Battalion, Mobile, on 27 August 1943.

In 1943, the 4th Battalion contained the following companies:

445th Troop Transport Company 446th Troop Transport Company 447th Troop Transport Company 448th Troop Transport Company 449th Troop Transport Company 450th Troop Transport Company

In 1944, the companies were re-designated as the following:

3807th Quartermaster Truck Company 3808th Quartermaster Truck Company 3809th Quartermaster Truck Company 3810th Quartermaster Truck Company 3710th Quartermaster Truck Company 3711th Quartermaster Truck Company

The battalion sailed to Europe on the *SS Argentina* and landed in Scotland on 4 April 1944 and move immediately to Herford, England where it was assigned to the First US Army. While in England, it continued to train; also, while stationed there, it received the attachment of four light truck companies.

During the invasion of France, one company landed on D+1, another company on D+3, and the balance of the battalion on D+10. All six companies landed at Utah Beach. One truck company provided direct logistical support to the 82nd Airborne Division and another company provided direct support to the 101st Airborne Division immediately after its arrival on the beach.

Typical direct support missions included motorizing the 1st and the 29th Infantry Divisions during a day and night move from Normandy to new battle positions on the perimeter of Breast on the Brittany Peninsula. Two additional truck companies were attached to the battalion for division movements. The trucks also transported the 2nd Infantry Division from St Lo to Brest.

It served in all the campaigns of the European Theater of Operation from Normandy through the Battle of the Bulge to Central Europe. It participated in the famed Red Ball Express and by Victory Europe (VE) Day, 7 May 1945; it was at Leipzig, Germany. The battalion had two officers and 14 enlisted men killed in action and 40 wounded. On 5 July the battalion moved to Munich where it was assigned to clear a depot. LTC Spillman was transferred from the battalion on 20 October.

On 1 August 1946, the Quartermaster Corps turned over all the truck battalions to the Transportation Corps and the 4th Quartermaster Battalion was converted and redesignated as HHD, 4th Transportation Corps Truck Battalion. It was later inactivated in Germany on 15 March 1947.

Cold War

In 1949 the Soviet Union tested its first nuclear bomb, thus ending the US nuclear monopoly. The communist Chinese under the leadership of Mao Tse Tung ousted the Nationalists. The combination of these events split the super powers into two camps, communist and democracies. From then on the US Army had to be ready to check communist expansion around the globe.

It was re-designated as HHD, 4th Transportation Truck Battalion on 21 April 1949 and activated at Naha, Okinawa, on 1 June 1949. Okinawa was retained as a strategic logistical base for the expansion of military operations throughout the Asian rim. The 4th Battalion was inactivated the next year on 1 July 1950.

Forts Story and Eustis, Virginia

It was re-designated as HHC, 4th Transportation Truck Battalion and allotted to the Regular Army on 20 November 1950. That summer, the US Army entered the Korean War and HHC, 4th Battalion was activated at Fort Story, Virginia, on 22 December 1950. It fell under the control of the 54th Transportation Truck Battalion, which provided command and administration for three transportation battalions in addition to three transportation companies attached solely to it.

The 4th Battalion initially assumed responsibility for the following companies:

Headquarters and Headquarters Company

5th Transportation Company (Heavy Truck)

10th Transportation Company (Heavy Truck)

62nd Transportation Company (Heavy Truck) (Petroleum)

640th Transportation Company (Heavy Truck)

The 4th Battalion's first years of existence were typified by a period of expansion and reorganization. On 31 October 1951, the 9224th TSU-TC Detachment III was activated at Fort Story to provide administrative overhead personnel for the purpose of command of all Transportation Corps and Second Army units stationed at Fort Story. The 4th Battalion like the 54th Battalion fell under its control. On 7 November 1951, however, the 4th Battalion was ordered to transfer the 5th, 10th and 640th Heavy Truck Companies to the 54th Battalion. The 62nd Heavy Truck Company had already left Fort Story for a tour in Germany on 18 April 1951. HHC, 4th Battalion had just returned from Exercise Snowfall. The 5th and 640th Heavy Truck Companies soon received orders for overseas movement.

On 18 March 1952, HHC, 4th Battalion was then transferred to the newly activated Transportation Highway Unit Training Center at Fort Eustis. The new command also assumed responsibility for the Post Motor Pool and picked up the 32nd Heavy Truck Company, 165th Truck Company and 80th Transportation Detachment. The 165th Truck Company then departed to participate in Operation Leghorn. The 88th and 151st Transportation Companies were activated in May 1952. While part of the Transportation Highway Unit Training Center, the 4th Battalion provided control for the following companies:

32nd Transportation Company (Heavy Lift) 88th Transportation Company (Troop) 151st Transportation Company 165th Transportation Company

On 15 August 1952, HHC, 48th Transportation Highway Group was activated at Fort Eustis and provided command and control for the 4th Transportation Battalion, the 502nd Traffic Regulating Group and the two new truck battalions at Fort Eustis. The 6th Truck Battalion was also activated on 15 August 1952 and the 126th Truck Battalion (NG WV), moved to Fort Eustis from Fort Pickett, Virginia, on 1 December 1952. The 48th Transportation Group (Truck) supported the Transportation Training Command.

The 88th Light Truck Company was reactivated at Fort Eustis, Virginia on 21 May 1952 and attached to the 4th Battalion. The 88th was originally an African-American unit that saw service in Sicily, India and Burma. It began slowly integrating right after that.

On 31 October 1952, the battalion was redesignated as HHC, 4th Transportation Battalion (Truck). The 17th and 19th Heavy Truck Companies were activated on 1 October 1952.

In April 1953, the 32nd Heavy Truck Company was reorganized as a medium truck company. On 25 September 1953, the 4th Battalion went through another reorganization and assumed responsibility for the following:

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17<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company (Heavy Truck)
19<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company (Heavy Truck)
88<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company (Light Truck)
151<sup>st</sup> Transportation Company
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Throughout the next few years, the companies supported Operation SUNEC in Greenland, summer training of cadets at West Point and ROTC, US Army Reserve unit and Transportation School student training at Fort Eustis. Truck companies were interchangeable. Each truck battalion usually participated in one major training exercise each year, but would provide command and control of companies from the battalions.

Coincidently, LTC Spillman, the first battalion commander during World War II, returned to command his old battalion for a short interim in February 1954 to replace MAJ David Hagen who became the battalion S-3. LTC William C. Gee then replaced Spillman that same year and commanded the battalion until 1955.

On 16 September 1954, the 48th Group made plans to balance out the number of companies in the three truck battalions. The 4th Battalion released its 17th Medium Truck to the 126th Battalion. However, with the end of the Korean War, the 126th Battalion prepared for its release from active duty and in 1954 transferred its 523rd and 557th Truck Companies to the 4th Battalion. The 88th Light Truck received orders to transfer to Germany in 1955. This left the 4th Transportation Battalion with the following companies:

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151<sup>st</sup> Transportation Company (Light Truck)
523<sup>rd</sup> Transportation Company (Light Truck)
590<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company (Light Truck)
597<sup>th</sup> Transportation Company (Medium Truck)
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On 6 July 1955, the 151st Light Truck Company was relieved from assignment to the 4th Battalion and attached to the newly activated 522nd Transportation Battalion. On 9 February 1955, the 522nd Transportation Battalion was organized out of the personnel and equipment when the 126th Battalion was released from active duty.

In late 1955, the Department of the Army notified the 4th Battalion that it would participate in Operation Gyroscope and depart for Germany on 1 April 1956. To prepare for the transfer to Germany, on 13 December 1955, the 523rd Light Truck Company was relieved form the 4th Battalion and assigned to the 522nd Battalion while the 15th and 16th Light Truck Companies were assigned to the 4th Battalion that same day to participate in GYROSCOPE.

On 1 December 1955, the 4th Transportation Battalion then commanded by LTC Nathaniel A. Gage, Jr., ceased operational commitments in support of the Transportation Command to begin planning and preparation for Operation GYROSCOPE. GYROSCOPE was an operation where a stateside unit replaced another overseas. The 4th Battalion would rotate over to Germany, to replace the 27th Transportation Battalion, which would replace it at Fort Eustis. The advance planning group of the 4th Battalion arrived in Europe on 15 November 1955 and the 27th sent its advance planning group to Fort Eustis, Virginia on 7 January 1956.

Germany

As part of GYROSCOPE, the 4th Battalion left Fort Eustis and replaced the 27th Battalion at Flak Kaserne, Ludwigsburg, Germany where it was attached to the 10th Transportation Highway Group on 7 April 1956. During the Cold War, US Army Europe (USAREUR) established its line of communication back to the ports of Northern France. The 37th Transportation Highway Group had responsibility for the first leg of the line haul. It handed off cargo to the 10th Transportation Highway Group in Germany which then delivered to the garrisons and units in the field. At that time, the 10th Group consisted of the 4th, 29th, and 38th Transportation Battalions. The 27th Battalion released its truck companies to the 4th Battalion, which included:

10th Transportation Company (Medium Truck) (S&P) 40th Transportation Company (Petroleum) 62nd Transportation Company (Medium Truck) (POL) 109th Transportation Company (Medium Truck) 590th Transportation Company (Light Truck)

Meanwhile, the 15th Transportation Company (Light Truck) was assigned to Bamberg, Germany and initially attached to the 3rd Infantry Division and provided direct support to the 2nd Battle Group, 4th Infantry Division. At that time the 3rd Infantry Division was a Pentomic Division.

In 1957, the 4th Battalion picked up the 32nd Transportation Company (Medium Truck) to replace the 10th Transportation Company (Medium Truck) at Ludwigsburg, which rotated back to Fort Eustis, Virginia, on 21 March under Operation GYROSCOPE where it was attached back to the 27th Battalion again. The 32nd Medium Truck Company had Gyroscoped to at Flak Kaserne in the town of Ludwigsburg, Germany, from Fort Eustis in April 1953 and was attached to the 4th Battalion. In 1957, LTC George L. Cook assumed command of the battalion.

The 62nd Medium Truck (POL) was transferred back to Fort Eustis in 1957 and was attached to the 29th Battalion. The 126th Transportation Company (Medium Truck) was attached to the 4th Battalion in 1958. In 1958, LTC Charles Rose assumed command of the 4th Battalion.

In June 1958, the 4th Transportation Battalion comprised the following companies:

Headquarters and Headquarters Company

32nd Transportation Company (Medium Truck) (S&P)

126th Transportation Company (Medium Truck) (Cargo)

590th Transportation Company (Light Truck) (Army)

Ludwigsburg

Ludwigsburg

Ludwigsburg

The 4th Battalion was re-designated and reorganized as HHD, 4th Transportation Battalion on 20 February 1959. The 126th Transportation Company was assigned to Karlsruhe. In 1960, MAJ Arthur J. Richards assumed interim command of the Battalion until LTC Ellsworth W. Smith took command that same year.

Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 4th Transportation Battalion (Truck) was reorganized and re-designated as Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 4th Transportation Battalion on 20 February 1959. The Battalion was then reorganized as HHD, 4th Transportation Battalion (Truck) on 24 June 1961. In 1961, LTC Chester E. Canine assumed command of the Battalion.

During the period of 9 February to 27 August 1959, the 32nd Medium Truck Company achieved the remarkable feat of driving 505,176 accident free miles thus inspiring the formation of the "Half Million Mile" Club. They made LTG Francis W. Ferrell, the Seventh Army Commander, an honorary member. The accident free run ended when Judson Doerfler was hauling a heavy load of aircraft sheet metal on his 5-ton S&P rig and failed to negotiate a turn. The load of sheet metal on the trailer, slide forward and sheared off the cab of the truck. Doerfler and his shotgun had discussed a method of the shotgun dropping to the floor and the driver dropping onto the seat to avoid a cargo forward shift. Had he and his shotgun not preplanned for such a possibility they would have both been sheared off with the cab.¹

In 1962, the 4th Transportation Battalion picked up three more truck companies; the 15th, Medium Truck, the 100th Light Truck and the 584th Light Truck. The 100th had been activated in Germany on 7 June 1951 and served in Alaska during World War II. The 15th Light Truck Company had also rotated over from Fort Eustis and was attached to the 3rd Infantry Division. When the division was reorganized as a mechanized division on 10 February 1962, the 15th Light Truck Company was attached to the 4th Transportation Battalion. In November and December 1962, the 15th Transportation Company received the new M-52 5-ton tractors and M-127 stake and platform (S&P) trailers and became a medium truck company. The 4th Battalion had the mission to provide general support to the Seventh Army units, plus providing direct support to the 3rd Infantry Division. In mid-April 1962, the 15th Light Truck received new M-52 tractors and M-127 stake and platform (S&P) trailers, and converted to a medium truck company. With that change it gave up its direct support role to the 3rd Infantry Division.

In 1962, the 4th Battalion contained the following companies:

15th Transportation Company (Medium Truck) (S&P)

¹ Jon Bacon email to Richard Killblane, December 20, 2007.

32nd Transportation Company (Medium Truck) (S&P) 100th Transportation Company (Light Truck) 584th Transportation Company (Light Truck) 590th Transportation Company (Light)

Evidently the 100th Light Truck was given to the 3rd Infantry Division in place of the 15th Medium Truck and stationed at Schweinfurt. The 100th would remain with the 3rd Infantry Division until the truck company was transferred back to Fort Eustis on 3 August 1968 where it was attached to the 38th Transportation Battalion.

In 1962, LTC Frederick P. Howland assumed command of the Battalion. Coincidently, he was a unit commander in the 2nd Infantry Division when it landed at Normandy and was transported by the 4th Battalion trucks. During the adverse winter of 1962-63, the 15th Medium Truck hauled several hundreds of tons of coal to Bamberg Post after the coal supply was exhausted.

In 1963, the 4th Transportation Battalion had the following companies attached:

15th Transportation Company (Medium)
32nd Transportation Company (Medium)
590th Transportation Company (Light)
Bamberg
Flak Kaserne, Ludwigsburg
Flak Kaserne, Ludwigsburg

The purpose of the 4th Battalion was to supply support to several armor companies, a few ordinance companies, and a few recon units. When the drivers left on a mission they might not return to their home base for several weeks.

By 1966, the 4th Battalion had picked up the 533rd Transportation Company stationed at Reese Kaserne, Augsburg, Germany with mostly 2 ½-ton trucks and a squad of 5-ton tractors and trailers. On 5 June 1967, Israel led a preemptive attack against its Arab neighbors, Egypt, Syria and Jordan, who were massing troops on its borders. The 4th Battalion was alerted for possible deployment but the war ended in six-days.

In 1969, the 590th Transportation Company was designated a light/medium truck company and then attached to the 181st Transportation Battalion as part of V Corps.

By 1973, the 396th Light Truck Company belonged to the 4th Battalion. It had M35 2 ½-ton trucks and was stationed at Flak Kaserne.

The 515th Transportation Company (POL), which had served under the 39th Transportation Battalion in Vietnam, was reactivated at Augsburg, Germany on 16 October 1982 and attached to the 4th Transportation Battalion. On 16 April 1986, the 11th Transportation Company (Heavy Equipment Trailer) was reactivated at Panzer Kaserne, Stuttgart and attached to the 4th Battalion. HETs were designed to haul the new M1 Abrams tanks along with other heavy tracked vehicles.

In the late 1980s, the 4th Battalion provided general support transportation to VII Corps as directed by the 229th Movement Control Center (TRANSCEN). The Battalion would also

be prepared to provide direct support to non-divisional and divisional units, as directed, and tailor support to meet surge and special operational requirements. Operations would be designed around the company as the base operating unit with major emphasis on small unit operations (squad level) during the hours of darkness (assume air priority as best case). In time of war, heavy lift assets would support evacuation operations and tactical movement operations and would be massed to ensure maximum and immediate response to tactical situations. In time of war, company level elements would also be prepared to sponsor and transition forces deploying from the United States. The 4th Battalion consisted of the following companies:

11th Transportation Company (Heavy) 15th Transportation Company (Medium) 32nd Transportation Company (Medium) 396th Transportation Company 515th Transportation Company

Panzer Kaserne, Böblingen Nellingen Kaserne, Stuttgart Flak Kaserne, Ludwigsburg Flak Kaserne, Ludwigsburg Flak Kaserne, Ludwigsburg

Operation DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM

On 4 December 1990, the 4th Transportation Battalion deployed to Saudi Arabia during Operation DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM and provided support to the 1st and 3rd Armor Division, 1st Infantry Division, 2nd Armored Calvary Regiment, 11th Aviation Brigade and all VII Corps non-divisional units. It received campaign participation credit for Defense of Saudi Arabia and Liberation and Defense of Kuwait and received the Meritorious Unit Commendation while there. During DESERT STORM, the 11th Heavy had moved tracked vehicles for the flank attack, hauled prisoners ammunition and latrines. The 515th POL hauled 11 million gallons of fuel in direct support of the 3rd Armored Division. Upon completion of DESERT STORM, the battalion redeployed to Flak Kaserne, Germany, on 22 May 1991.

Corps Support Battalion at Fort Lewis

In the downsizing following DESERT STORM, the 4th Transportation Battalion relocated from Germany to Fort Lewis, Washington, on 22 November 1991 and was attached to the 593rd Area Support Group. The battalion provided general support to all units on Fort Lewis. On 17 October 1992, the battalion was redesignated as the 44th Corps Support Battalion. The 11th Heavy and the 515th POL Truck Companies were transferred to the 181st Transportation Battalion. In February 1992, 11th HET moved to Johnson Barracks, Furth, Germany and on 26 August 1994, was attached to the 71st Corps Support Battalion. It was inactivated on 15 June 1995. The 32nd Transportation Company was sent to Fort Carson, Colorado and attached to the 68th CSB (former 68th Transportation Battalion). The 396th was sent back to the United States where it was attached to the 87th Corps Support Battalion (former 87th Maintenance Battalion, which had also deployed from Germany in late 1991) and between August through October 1994, the 396th turned in its M915 tractors and M872 trailers for a fleet of 48 Palletized Loading Systems (PLS) and remained at the forefront of testing program of the new system.

On 20 August 1995, the Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment, 44th CSB deployed to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, providing logistical support for the migrant relief effort during Operation SEA SIGNAL. Meanwhile, I Corps deployed 9,850 Soldiers to the Yakima Training Center for Exercise CASCADE SAGE. This exercise integrated the 3rd Brigade Combat Team (BCT) and nine other corps brigades for 10 days of force-on-force field training. The 44th Corps Support Battalion performed support without the benefit of its headquarters.

Operation Iraqi Freedom

The HHD, 44th Corps Support Battalion deployed to Logistic Base Seitz, Iraq, in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) during the second year of the war from 13 November 2003 to 11 October 2004.

The 497th Transportation Company had been at Fort Lewis since 1967 and was realigned under 44th Corps Support Battalion on 28 October 2004. It also deployed to Camp Seitz, Iraq.

In 2004, the battalion had the following units:

HHD 24th Quartermaster Company 497th Transportation Company 542nd Maintenance Company

CAMPAIGN PARTICIPATION CREDIT

<u>World War II</u>: Normandy, Northern France, Rhineland, Ardennes-Alsace, Central Europe

<u>Southwest Asia</u>: Defense of Saudi Arabia, Liberation and Defense of Kuwait, Cease-Fire

War on Terrorism: Campaigns to be determined

DECORATIONS

Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army), Streamer embroidered SOUTHWEST ASIA 1990-1991

Meritorious Unit Commendation (Army), Streamer embroidered SOUTHWEST ASIA 2003-2004

Bibliography

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Ross, Colonel Bob and Colonel Jim Tatum, "CSS Training in a Split-Based Brigade," http://www.almc.army.mil/alog/issues/sepoct/ms121.htm

11th Transportation Company (HET), Global Security.org, http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/agency/army/11trans-co.htm